

IOWA BIRD LIFE



Brian Wheeler
Photographer

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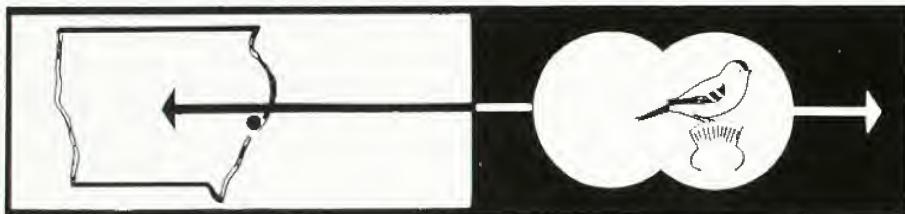
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Davenport -- Scott County and Adjacent Rock Island County Areas

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DAVENPORT

Davenport (metro) 1971 population: 122,176
Average annual precipitation: 32.8 inches
Normal mean annual temperature average: 50.1 degrees
Area covered by this report: 477 sq. miles
18 year average species Christmas census record: 72.2

Introduction

Although travelers along the Mississippi River noted observations of birds in the Davenport area for the past 300 years, the first observer to keep regular records was Burtis H. Wilson. He lived in Rock Island but in a ten year period from 1884-1894 he recorded 168 species in Iowa near or in Davenport. Considering the mobility in that age this is a fine total and it also establishes the basic precept of area birders to ignore the state line. Reinforcing this precept is the problem of state designation of those birds seen on the Mississippi itself, which state are they in when on the river? Since the channel is the boundary and this can be up to one half mile wide we usually consider that these birds are in both states. Hence this article deals with birding in the adjacent areas in Rock Island County, Illinois, which are influenced by the Mississippi River. Currently there are four automobile bridges over the Mississippi with a fifth nearly completed.

In addition to the Mississippi River, Scott County is bordered on the north by the Wapsipinicon River. Its course follows an old bed of the Mississippi for most of its run past Scott County and consequently the valley of this river is one to two miles wide, creating some fine marshy areas. Despite drainage, some of these areas remain along with some very sandy situations. Much of the woodland along the Wapsipinicon is very thick and seldom visited except in winter. South of the Wapsipinicon bluff the land is rolling farmland with some good tracts of upland timber, especially Allen's Grove to the west and in the Scott County Park and

Pinneo's Grove near Princeton to the east. Small ponds throughout this area attract migrating ducks and shore birds depending on their stage. In the southern part of the county most of the timber has been removed but some good tracts can be found toward Blue Grass to the west and around Pleasant Valley to the east. The only good marsh in Davenport, Nahant Marsh, is being turned into an industrial park. The rolling nature of the land in much of Scott County, especially the eastern half, prevents extremely intensive cultivation and results in many pasture areas with resulting larger bird concentrations. About 275 species have been recorded in Scott County in recent years. The adjacent areas upstream and downstream will be covered in future articles and their inclusion brings this total to over 300 species. We have some areas which are composed of many habitats and they will be covered under their location, bottomland or upland.

RIVER BOTTOMS

Credit Island Park, a 420 acre island in the Mississippi, is joined to the Iowa shore by a causeway and considerable silt presently. This is a fine all around birding area despite some poor management on the part of the city park people. The downstream end is covered with bottomland forest in a reasonably virgin state but other sections have been systematically cleared and one area was recently used as a land fill garbage dump. A golf course covers much of the east end of the island. In spring it is a good spot to observe migrants in the wooded areas and depending on the stage of the Mississippi may be good for ducks and shore birds. Many woodland species breed as well as Wood Ducks. In fall the mudflat adjacent to the causeway attracts many shorebirds. In winter Bald Eagles can often be seen in good numbers perching along the river and on Pelican Island just upstream from the causeway. A feeder is maintained in the lower wooded area. The park lies off highway 61 in west Davenport.

Lock 14 is reached by taking highway 67 just past Pleasant Valley to a marked road on the right. If you come from Interstate 80 leave on exit 74 (highway 67) and drive south 1.3 miles. You first pass the lock then turn left where a sign notes the road. Park in the access area just below a lock of the original canal built in the early 1900's. From this point in winter Bald Eagles can be seen in the woods downstream on the Iowa shore, on the ice below the roller dam, flying overhead or in the cottonwoods on the Illinois shore. Check below the roller dam for diving ducks. You may walk to the roller dam area and check the ducks and gulls more closely, with the possibility of finding Snow Buntings enroute. During migration and the breeding season it may be worth your time to walk across the causeway to the wooded area, Smith's Island, above the old canal locks. The pond between these woods and the roller dam is worth checking for gulls and ducks. It has several marshy borders which provide yet another habitat. If you are only looking for eagles and ducks, you can approach from the Illinois side. Leave Interstate 80 on the Illinois side of the river and take highway 84 west until you are even with the roller dam. A gravel road leads to a parking area and vantage point. You can continue down highway 84 to Hampton and turn left on a marked road to reach Illiniwek County Forest Preserve. This wooded area is good during migration and contains an eagle roost.

Rock Island Arsenal, another good bottomland forest area, is reached by taking the government bridge from downtown Davenport. A military installation, it is still accessible since it contains a national cemetery. Woodland birds are the primary attraction and some fine warbler concentrations have been observed in the spring.

Sunset Park, Rock Island, lies across the Mississippi from Credit Island. Considerably smaller, but it boasts a fine marshy pond along highway 199. It also has a sizeable area of bottomland forest at the mouth of the Rock River. It provides a vantage point for the river where eagles can be seen as well as gulls. It will become more accessible from Iowa with the completion of the Interstate 280 bridge.

Princeton Marshes - Mouth of the Wapsipinicon is an area which can provide a fine variety of birds if one has time to explore it completely and in summer a boat or canoe is required. Turn off highway 67 north of Princeton on the marked roads. The area consists of a maze of heavily wooded islands with some unique breeding birds such as the Brown Creeper, Prothonotary, Cerulean and Kentucky Warblers and may produce Parula or Yellow-throated Warblers. It is the least worked area in this locality. Adjacent to the wooded area is a large state owned marsh which is also best covered by boat or canoe. In August large numbers of swallows congregate. Following the Wapsipinicon upstream the bottomland forest stretches across the northern edge of the county. Check this area at any of the several bridges and with a good ear you will identify many species.

McCausland Area, a fine diverse habitat region reached by taking paved county road F33 east from highway 61 at a point about ten miles north of Interstate 80. Marshy areas are located a mile north of F33 on a gravel road about three miles east of 61, about three and one-half miles east of 61 along F33 and two miles east of F33 at a point over a mile south of McCausland. The last mentioned area also has a sandy spot noted for Lark Sparrows. Along F33 west of McCausland flocks of American Golden Plover frequently rest in the plowed fields in April and early May. The cemetery just north of McCausland provides a good view of some ponds.

UPLAND AREAS

Duck Creek Park is another city park in east Davenport just off Locust Street. Considerable woods remain, enough to support breeding Great Horned Owls. It is a good place to see migrant woodland birds. A pine planting in the north area near the picnic grounds attracts additional species. The area around Duck Creek Park to the south consists of ravines which are often very productive. Hawks often are seen overhead in good numbers.

Pine Hill Cemetery is another area within the city limits of Davenport off 39th Street just west of Eastern Ave. The site of the authors twelve year migration study, this area illustrates the large number of species which pass through a very unimpressive appearing spot. The net set is operated both spring and fall during the migration period. Among the birds banded here are over 100 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 86 Saw-whet Owls, and 32 species of warblers. Pine plantings add to the variety, especially in the winter.

Oakdale Cemetery is east of Eastern Ave., south of Duck Creek. Pine and larch plantings throughout the deciduous trees add to the variety of bird life. Along the creek on the north edge of the cemetery undergrowth and some ponds and a wet, grassy area create additional varied habitat and attract other birds.

Fairmont Cemetery is reached by turning east off highway 61 at the junction with highway 22. It is a few blocks from this junction on the north side of Rockingham Road. The pine and hemlock plantings near the crematorium at this entrance are frequently visited by winter finches and crossbills. The major portion of the cemetery lies atop the bluff and includes many wooded ravines which are especially productive during migration.

Fejervary Park is a 75 acre atop the bluff on 12th Street west of Division. It features a wooded ravine which is worth checking during migration. Hawks can sometimes be seen migrating overhead using the air currents. While in this area on a weekday the visitor is invited to stop at the Davenport Museum, at 12th and Division, to check with the author on birds present in the area.

Pinneo's Grove is an area of private land about a mile north of Princeton where F33 leaves highway 67. Take the gravel road going west from this intersection and you will be in the area of the grove. The woodland on both sides of the road is good for migrants and can be worked from the road. This area would make a fine state park, something lacking in one of the largest counties in the state.

Scott County Park is located one-half mile east of highway 61 at a point about seven miles north of Interstate 80 on a well marked road. It combines dense timber with grassland and hawthorn thickets to provide a good variety of breeding and migrant birds. Covering 1,270 acres it has some almost untouched timber where Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls nest. Early morning hikes in this park followed by a car trip to the nearby McCausland area provide a well balanced list during the migration period.

Allen's Grove is another private area of virgin timber which lies about two miles west of Donahue on county road Y4E. Although it is private land the author has never been questioned while birding here. This area is good during migration and has a good compliment of breeding woodland species.

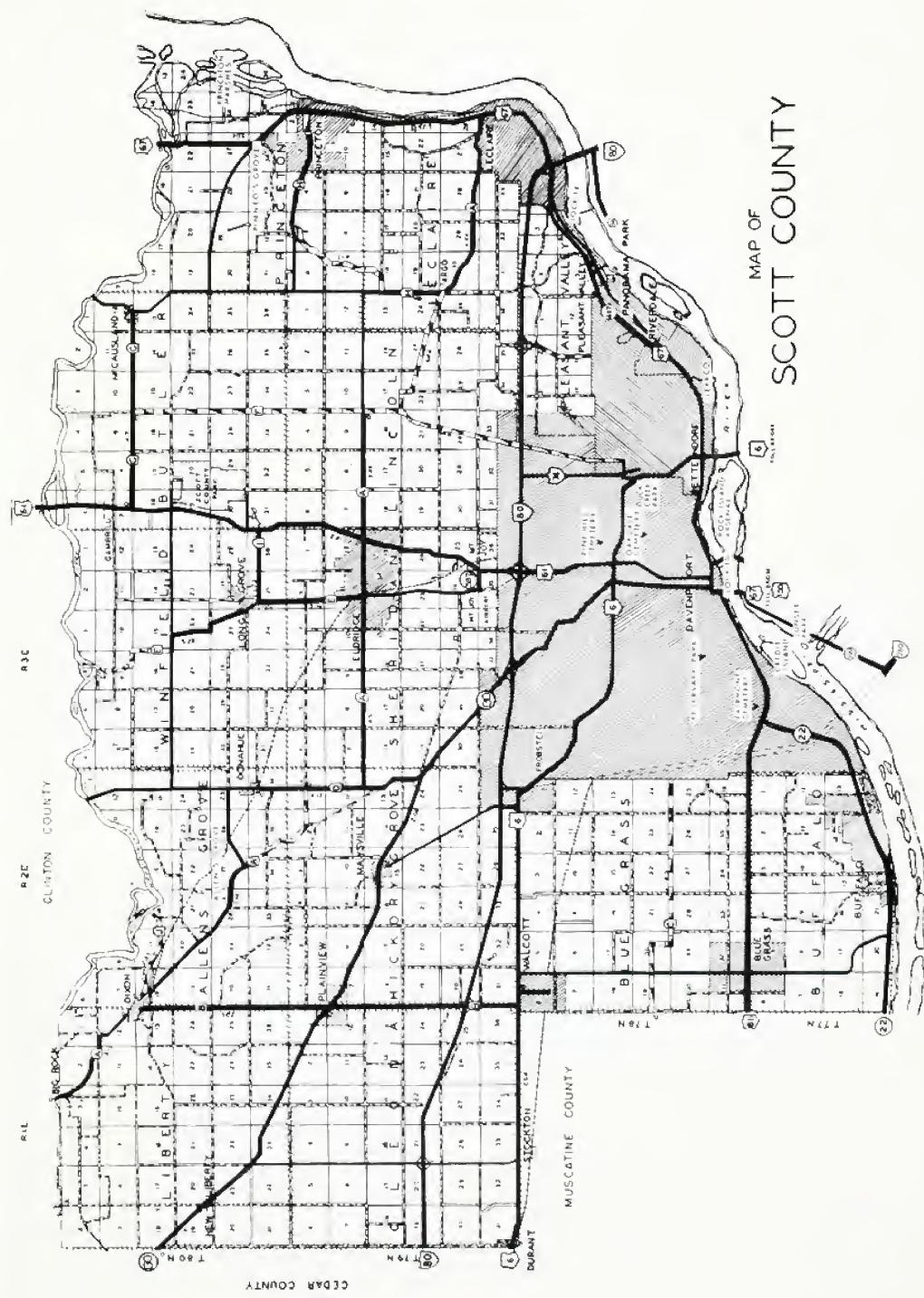
OTHER AREAS

LeClaire to Princeton along highway 67 is an excellent trip in March and early April when the diving ducks are moving through. Concentrations of up to ten thousand, chiefly Lesser Scaup, have been noted. The location of the birds varies, so one must either stop along the highway or pull off into driveways when flocks are seen on the river.

Texaco Area is a vantage point at the mouth of Duck Creek which is good during the winter for viewing ducks, eagles and gulls. Turn south off highway 67

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just west of Duck Creek and follow the road to the river. Eagles are usually seen upstream, sometimes resting in the trees near the mouth of the creek. Lingering pond ducks are often in the creek mouth area, as well as kingfishers. Diving ducks and gulls are seen in the main channel of the Mississippi.

Lock 15 near downtown Davenport is another good spot to check in winter. A large number of gulls is usually present and should be checked for accidentals. Eagles occasionally feed here and rest on the lower end of Arsenal Island.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

Needless to say many small, private areas have not been mentioned in this article. Often these can prove more productive than the larger, better known and covered areas. Davenport intends to provide a "green belt" parkway area along Duck Creek across the city east to west. As this is developed some sections may come to be outstanding bird spots.

During inclement weather one should not overlook the value of a visit to the Davenport Museum, mentioned above under Fejervary Park, to view the exhibits. For those close enough the evening Ornithology Classes under the Adult Education Program held at the museum may be of interest. The Davenport Public Library located at 4th and Main Streets has some bird books and is situated in a beautiful new building.

Scott County is surrounded by good birding areas and in future articles the areas upstream and downstream in Clinton and Muscatine Counties will be covered as mentioned previously. Volunteers are needed to prepare articles on their localities. It is planned to reprint these articles together in booklet form in about four years, so we hope you will come forth with an article on your area.

A Sky Patrol

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CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Our Heavenly Father has given us the birds that patrol the sky. Mainly these birds are the ones that instinctively patrol the sky to catch luckless insects in the arching blue for food for themselves and young ones and for safety one acts as a siren warning of a coming storm.

The 'Law of the Readiness of Learning' is touched off by a stimulus. Such was the case with my wishing to study and write about the sooty Chimney Swift. Previously I had partially blamed them for helping to plug up our chimney on the farm, first smoking us out and finally later contributing to a combustive explosion thereby burning our house down. The latter part of last April after a heavy rain I found a dead Chimney Swift in the depression at the end of the drain pipe. When I picked it up it felt like a cigar in my hand. It couldn't be a swallow with such a tail. It was 5½ to less than 6 inches long. It must have been the cause of the scratching in the down spout leading to the drain pipe a few days before.

I studied four good sources of natural history but of them all *Birds of an Iowa Dooryard* by Althea R. Sherman was the best on their nidification in her Chimney

Swift Tower. The Chimney Swift pair have an exemplary home life. A roughened vertical surface is necessary for their half-saucer-shaped 3 by 4 inch nest of short sticks which they break off dead tree branches using both feet and beak while still in the air and glued together with their tenacious saliva. Their eggs are 4-6, glossy white, and are incubated and brooded by both parents. The young are fed by regurgitation. The nestlings are soon crowded out of the small nest. With their long, sharp, much curved claws and using their short, spiny-tipped tail quills as props as woodpeckers do are able to hang on to a position at the upper left of the nest just a little above it.

Swifts are well named. Probably there are no swifter birds. Even the swooping falcon can rarely if ever overtake one. Swifts have been known to travel 110 m.p.h. The hand-part of the wing is greatly elongated, in common with goatsuckers and hummingbirds. The flight is swift and erratic, rapid wing strokes alternating with periods of sailing. However, they do alight when nesting and roosting. They rest sometimes beneath the young ones on the wall supporting them with their heads and shoulders. Their wings are decidedly curved with a spread of around a foot; so when in a frolicsome spirit they play making many aerial revolutions. Swifts, like goatsuckers and swallows, have short beaks, and flat, angular mouths which open like a pocketbook making a trap to capture insects on the wing.

Where do the Chimney Swifts go when not nesting? The parents may return to the chimney to roost but the young join flocks of Chimney Swifts and spend the daylight hours over the river towns. In the evenings sometimes they are mistaken for bats. They roost in unused chimneys of school houses and factories. Thousands of them gather over them and funnel in and arrange themselves in orderly rows from the top down. Chimney Swifts are never quarrelsome although gregarious. Early in the morning they leave in reverse manner circling in ever widening circles until they take off. They start to leave for South America by August 15th although some are seen in September and well into October. They will feed as they go southward over the rivers twittering and chattering.

William, a welder, is a 'sky watcher'. Not only does he watch the jet liners and their vapor trails as their route between Omaha and Chicago passes directly over our homes and the odd shapes and changes of the cloud formations but also the aerial maneuvers of the Common Nighthawks. On one such evening he remarked that those nighthawks nested on the roof of Methwick Manor on the ridge above us. My curiosity was aroused because in the country I had watched their courtship maneuvers over the valley floor when picking berries on our fruit farm after supper. They came down from the woods on the hills half a mile away where the Whip-poor-wills also called. I don't recall hearing the loud booming sound made by the sudden upward turn near the earth after swoops every now and then abruptly downward but William said he had heard these booms and didn't know what they were. The town nighthawks have substituted the pitch and graveled roofs for rock ledges and bare ground in open spaces for laying their two thickly speckled, grayish eggs. He said that they will 'dive-bomb' you good should you climb out upon that roof after which they play broken wing to attract your attention away; although they, their eggs and young are well camouflaged on the roof. The heat the roof has absorbed will help incubate the eggs and brood the young while the parent birds go hunting insects in the early evening and dark days. They fly in a zig-zag path, circling, diving and banking as they feed on flying insects. When in the air

They belong to the goatsucker family as do the Whip-poor-wills. They agree in having soft, owl-like plumage, (the nighthawk's is darker and more gray.), wide heads, big eyes, large ear openings, weak, more or less hooked bills, enormous mouth opening to back below the eye and small feet with the middle toe longest and the nail with a comb-like inner border. The Whip-poor-wills have long bristles above the angles of the mouth and a rounded tail while the nighthawk has a longer slightly forked tail. The Whip-poor-will is more strictly nocturnal than the nighthawk. When resting on dead leaves the Whip-poor-will is almost invisible, however, some fall victims to owls. It flies little except when feeding, rising from a shady place on the ground in woods flying by low, short flights. It is more often heard than seen.

Who has not heard the weird cry of the Whip-poor-will? It is an indication of corn planting time. It likes to rest in open places in the moonlight such as roads, doorstones, glades, etc. I once heard its resonant repeated calls from the woodpile. His clucking was so loud that we couldn't sleep. He pumps, power vibrating his entire body without opening his mouth says one ornithologist.

The nighthawk has the longest migration route of any North American land bird - from southern Yukon in the north to Argentina in the south patrolling the sky for insect food all the way. The Whip-poor-will only migrates to Central America. The nighthawks of Methwick Manor left in late August but William noticed migrating flocks of 100 to 200 of them for more than a month later.

The swallows -- those graceful, harmless, valuable birds are seldom seen now-a-days patrolling the sky largely due to those two alien, 'detestable pests', the Starlings and House Sparrows. Let's make war on these interlopers!

The Purple Martin is the largest and most conspicuous of our swallows -- 7 1/4 to 8 1/2 inches long; wing spread 15 1/2 - 16 3/4 inches; the tail is forked but not deeply. Males have a violet head with a metallic gloss also on the body, grading into black on wings and tail. In flight their wings are more triangular than other swallows. Female and young are gray mottled; she has a lighter grayish breast and a white belly, they with grayish breast. Both have a very innocent look. All martins have the pocketbook-like mouths.

The Purple Martin is so closely associated in our minds with dooryards and gardens that a martin colony has come to be symbolic of community interest and simple home life. The glossy white unmarked eggs, 3 - 8, are laid in the early nests composed of a conglomerate of leaves, grasses, rags and feathers. Later nests have a platform of mud with a protective wall before the entrance with a living of bits of green leaves. Those of the Seckel pear tree nearby in my garden are used to try to keep their apartments cool.

After the hatching of the young both parents are kept busy coming and going, constantly bringing mosquitoes, squash beetles, locusts (grasshoppers and cicadas) and flying insects of various kinds. These are taken on the wing in graceful easy flight at its usual moderate speed, but at need it can fly very fast. It easily catches fast flying dragonflies and butterflies. How I was irritated by finding several wings of the Red Admiral a few feet from the base of the martin house pole! After the young grabbed the bodies the parents dropped the wings. There was a plethora of Red Admirals that year; also by the wings of the scarce Great Spangled Fritillary. These butterflies are such expert dodgers that comparatively few birds get them. Martins take nearly all of their food on the wing. They known to go 20 miles to where the air currents are warmer. Nevertheless, some individuals

learn to go in cases of emergency to the ground where they walk and pick up or catch insects. In severe weather such birds might survive by thus obtaining dead or benumbed ones.

William likes to relax on the chaise-lounge on the lawn of their backyard not far from his two martin houses after his day's work is done to dream and watch the aerial evolutions of the adults as well as those of the young martins who leave their nests 24 to 28 days after hatching. Usually they fly quite readily, but many of them return to the nest night after night for a week or ten days, especially if the weather be windy or stormy. In the meantime they learn to alight on trees and on the service wires and telephone lines nearby.

William saw and felt their swift massing for attack and dive-bombings when he climbed up to put the young ones back when the hot weather forced them out on the unrailed porch where they fell off down to the ground. Several of the young died of the heat. William found them like dried herrings when he cleaned up their houses this fall.

William has learned this recreation by a month or more of carrying out the extension ladder to climb 20 feet up and jerking out the House Sparrow and Starling nests each evening. If they persist he 'knocks them off' with his pump gun. This begins about two weeks after the scouts arrive, around April eighth, after he raises the white trimmed in light blue and red respectively, houses on bolt-hinged 20 foot poles and uncovers their entrances.

Our Purple Martins are not around after the middle of August; however, they are seen hunting over the Cedar River a while later. In the latter part of August or early September they begin their southward migration. Usually old males are the first to go. They have been gradually assembling in large flocks which roost together at night usually in trees with dense foliage. Then a day comes when at daybreak all is excitement and commotion. On one such time I counted 35 martins lined up on the telephone wires out back in the alley. Soon the flock circles and rises to a great height, and off they go, commonly heading southwest but ending up southward. The young birds follow a little later. All hunt insects for food over the water bodies as they go. They migrate through Central America, Venezuela and the Guianas to finally winter in Brazil. We miss them for a while but know they will come back.

How our forefathers enjoyed swallows! My maternal great-grandfather, Brazilla VanNote, sitting in his old rocking chair on the east porch of his Iowa farmhouse smoking his pipe watched the flocks of Cliff Swallows that nested under the eaves of his unpainted barn and reminisced of his Dutch patroon ancestral home on the Hudson at Jersey City.

Could there be anything or anyone of more inspiration to tornado victims faced with the colossal job of building up their homes and other buildings of their torn down town than the patience of the nest building Cliff Swallows dexterously snatching up mouthful after mouthful of viscid mud from a miry ditch to build up a nest washed down by beating rains; furthermore, bracing themselves with their tails, woodpecker-fashion, and balancing by the help of their wings to hold the mud pellets in place until they dry enough to hold the nest's foundation?

When our family was riding along in the two-seated spring wagon pulled by Duke and Mack, our good farm team, returning from a visit to our aunts, Dad pointed to a colony of Bank Swallows off to our left so far that we couldn't see the details but only their silhouetted forms in rapidly zig-zagging flights and the dark

holes in as regular an order as the windows of a factory because these Bank Swallows had excavated them mostly with their feet in the loess bank using the strata of clay found there between gravel and sand along the east bank of East Otter Creek on the prairie. The Bank Swallows suffer disasters too. Sometimes a mink or a weasel will climb to their nests and destroy the contents, or a torrential flood will undermine the bank caving it off to destruction. A cold, rainy spell can keep them huddled in their burrows until they starve to death.

The Bank Swallow is our smallest swallow, length $4\frac{3}{4}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. However, the Rough-winged Swallow is only a quarter of an inch longer with the primary feather stiffly barbed but it seldom builds its own tunnel preferring to use that of an abandoned burrow of the kingfisher and other holes and crevices. It is not so communal as the Bank Swallow. It is pleasant to watch them, if you ever get a chance, as they wheel and pass in rapid flight over an established route it seems of streams, ponds, marshes and meadows.

Before the money depression of the early 1930's the slough pasture with fringes of timber across the road from our farm home must have been the only available nesting territory of the Tree Swallows. There were rotting limbs, cavities in fence posts of the fence falling down and woodpecker holes in dead trees drowned out in a wet season desired for nesting. Tree Swallow, although not very communal, are neighborly to man and will build in suitable bird boxes; although they like to be near the water that they may hunt insects in their circuitous flights over it as their glittering white and metallic darks are mirrored in it as they dash and dip to drink and bathe.

The male Tree Swallow is very pugnacious in the nesting season. Furious battles may be seen between rival males as well as fierce struggles for the possession of nesting boxes. Often these combats are with bluebirds, oddly enough since the contestants are both messengers of happiness. The law of beak and claw holds for overpopulated birds too it seems.

The rising temperature and balmy air of a sunny April day will welcome the Tree Swallows back. They are earliest of the swallows to arrive thereby being often the harbinger of spring instead of the Robins and bluebirds. A sudden cold spell will cause them to turn back to return on the next warm wave. Their warbling twitter attracted our attention to look up or out to admire the steely green or blue-black above and snowy white below with slightly forked tail as they rested on the low, rural telephone lines.

They are soon interested in nesting sites -- either inspecting old ones or exploring for new places. The nest is made cozy with a lining of fine grasses and feathers - white ones preferred. By around the middle of July the single brood is reared - the eggs number 4 to 10, and are white.

In August thousands of Tree Swallows congregate along the bodies of water and roost in the marshes. They scatter about in the daytime feeding on insects and berries. (We have those from the juniper, woodbine, bittersweet, elderberry, barberry; also wild grapes and haws to offer them). Besides berries they eat weed seeds. The flocks continue to grow from accession from the interior by the thousands. They cover telegraph and telephone wires for miles. When ready to migrate, they sometimes rise to great heights. A huge black cloud of Tree Swallows came rapidly in from the west rolled, gyrated and came down like a

'water spout' into the center of the marsh. The Tree Swallow is the only one of its tribe that winters in the United States, in the southern part, also Cuba and Honduras.

For many seasons a pair of Barn Swallows plastered their nest on the inside of a beam over the calves' pen beyond the stanchions for three cows. It was made of mud pellets reinforced with bits of straw and lined with grasses and feathers; the eggs were supposedly white, speckled and spotted with brown. The top south barn door was always kept nailed back against the side of the barn to afford ventilation for the eight milk cows kept in this the cows' part of the barn. Five cows were kept on the other side of the feed entry.

The latter part of April these pioneers would return. When we were milking, we would welcome the Barn Swallows back from whichever of these places they had wintered -- Mexico, Brazil, northern Argentina and central Chile. The sweet liquid notes of their twittering sort of relieved the monotony of milking and chores. To my knowledge the cats of the barn never caught them.

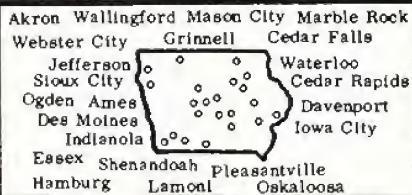
The Barn Swallow with the blue of its upper parts complimented by the chestnut of its forehead and throat and buff under sides, makes it our most beautiful swallow and its deeply forked tail helps to make it the most graceful.

The young hatch in 16 days and perched on the high oak board partition fence of the calves' pen safely while the parents fed them. When the young are able to fly well, they do not desert the old home entirely but often spend several nights near the nest. Now and then they return to the same neighborhood and some have been known to join the parents in feeding the young of the second brood. Over the miry manure yard there were swarms of mosquitoes and gnats for their food. The male usually cares for the first brood until they are well able to fly and learn to catch their own food; meanwhile the female prepares for the second brood. The numerous Barn Swallows are children of the serial spaces. They spend a great part of each long summer day on the wing. They eat and drink on the wing, as they drink and also bathe by dipping down to the surface of the water. Our Barn Swallows had the long stock tank nearby for these uses.

Barn Swallows are very industrious birds, working many hours daily and missing no chances. They have been heard in the moonlight after dark still hunting the abundant mosquitoes along the margins of the rivers where they were recognized only by their notes. When the air is warm and the sky is clear, many small insects rise very high with the upward movements of heated air and the swallows follow them. In cool, cloudy weather, with no upward movements of heated air from the ground, insects fly low, and the swallows then sweep close to the water or the grass tops.

Most of the individuals of the first brood probably leave for the rivers in August where they flock with other swallows in preparation for their southward journey. Hundreds sometimes gather to roost in the marshes. Hawking breakfast low then rising high they join hundreds of thousands of others to move gradually southeastward to the Bahamas and West Indies and on southward to their winter homes feeding as they go.

FIELD REPORTS



FALL MIGRATION - 1971

September was warm and very dry, precipitation being only half of normal, and October was also warm and extremely dry until a series of rains set in toward the end of the month. November has been warmer than usual with numerous rains.

Grebies, Pelicans, Cormorants, Herons. A flock of 14 Horned Grebes on 13 November was unusual (LS) as was a record of two at Lizard Lake on the early date of 22 September (AP). There were as many Eared as Horned in Polk Co. A Western Grebe was seen on 2 November (WHB), 13 November west of Dixon by Janice Hall and Mel Peterson (fide PP), and on 20 November at Lake Cornelius. Pied-billed were thought few (GB), but seemed in usual numbers elsewhere. Flocks of White Pelicans were noticed in October at DeSoto Bend (DH), Marble Rock (PK), Lamoni (DG), Union Slough (AP) and Estherville (JB), fide GB, but none appeared at Red Rock Refuge this fall (GB). About 300 Cormorants were seen at Lake Rathbun in late October by Wesley Newcomb (fide GB). All reports mentioning Great Blue Herons referred to considerable numbers. Common Egrets at Red Rock peaked at 20 late in September (GB). The only mention of Night Herons: 2 Black-crowned on 9 September and 6 October (DG), and 1 immature Yellow-crowned on 12 September (GB).

Geese, Ducks. Canada Geese, first appearing on 17 September at Red Rock, peaked at 1,000 (GB). Aerial surveys on 9-10 November showed these Blue and Snow populations: DeSoto Bend, 250 M; Forneys Lake, 70 M; Riverton, 48 M; Red Rock, 3,800 (JB fide GB). White-fronted were seen on 24 August and 13 September (GdeL). Aerial counts at Red Rock found 30 M Mallards at Red Rock and 60 M on 1 and 10 November (GB). Blue-winged Teal numbering 300 were seen on 8 September (DG). At least 1,000 Wood Ducks were present by 14 October (GB).

Vultures, Hawks. On 4 September there was a good movement of Turkey Vultures (EG), with three big roosts at Red Rock, the largest with more than 300 (GB). Only 1 Sharp-shinned was netted (PP), and 1 seen on 15 September (RH), but these, and Cooper's, were thought up (DK). Red-tailed were in good numbers (EB,GB) with a Krider's type seen 13 October (DK). Flocks of Broad-winged were observed on 16, 18, and 19 September (RH). Rough-legged were thought numerous (EB,GB), but appeared fewer in Polk Co. An immature Golden Eagle was seen on 17 October at Union Slough (AP). There have been at least 4 immature Bald Eagles at Red Rock (GB). Marsh Hawks were not numerous but up (DK), numerous since 13 September (GB), with 7 seen on 10 October (RH). An Osprey was seen 20 September (GdeL), with two reports at Sioux City (DH). Sparrow Hawks were seen regularly (PP), but few (EB,GB).

Bobwhites, Pheasants, Partridges. Bobwhites are abundant (DG). Pheasants, abundant or plentiful (DG,PP,DH), but still below par (EB). Partridges are down (EB).

Shorebirds. A dried-up lake at Lamoni produced large numbers (DG, GDeL), but sandpipers were short (GB), no reports (RZ), and few waders in Polk Co. Killdeers appear unusually numerous in various locations. Twin Lakes produced 26 Black-bellied Plovers on 9 October with more at Union Slough on 17 October (AP). A Woodcock was still present on 11 November (PP). Snipe have been seen in flocks, 30 on 10 October (RH), 12 on 25 September and 19 on 24 October (GB) with smaller numbers in Polk Co. Three Dunlins, which are usually late, were seen on 11 November (DM). Three Buff-breasted Sandpipers were found on 29 August (HP). Avocets were observed: 2 at Coralville on 20 August, and 1 at Conesville on 6 September (FK), and 3 on 25 September at Red Rock (WC).

Gulls, Terns. Herring Gulls are reported away from the Mississippi from two areas, 3 on Cedar Lake 13 November (LS), and 3 seen twice in September and October (GB). Cedar Lake also had 8 Ring-billed on the same date, and Red Rock had small flocks of 25-50. Franklin's Gulls were seen frequently (PK), and more than 500 were seen on two occasions (GB). The rare Least Tern was seen on 13 August at Flint Access in Polk Co. (DM). Caspian Terns were seen several times in September (DG), and a flock of 20 was found on 25 September at Red Rock (WC).

Doves, Cuckoos, Owls. Doves seemed fewer (PK), but good numbers were banded (PP). Cuckoos were generally scarce in Polk Co. with none banded (PP). A Short-eared Owl on 9 November was the first of the season (DG). A Saw-whet was in the Joe Browns' yard on 27 October, and 8 were banded between 16 October and 11 November (PP).

Nighthawks, Woodpeckers. A slight movement of Nighthawks was noticed in Des Moines on 4 September, and there were thought not as many as usual (GB). A large flock of Flickers was reported early in October (MS fide RZ). A sapsucker was seen on 7 October (GDeL) and 7 were banded between 6 September and 3 October (PP). Another was seen 24 October at Red Rock (WC).

Flycatchers, Swallows. A late E. Phoebe was seen on 17 October (DK) and the last seen on 1 November was a new late record (PP). A large, Empidonax migration was noted on 9-11 September (GDeL). A total of 22 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were netted from 20 August to 25 September (PP). Wood Pewees were fewer (PK). Swallows seemed fewer (PK, GB), and only one flight, 400 Cliff and Bank on 10 September was noted (DG). Many Tree Swallows were on Blue Lake on 20 September, and large numbers of Barn Swallows at DeSoto Bend on 17 October, with thousands of Purple Martins as usual in Sioux City late in August (DH).

Jays, Nuthatches, Creepers, Wrens. A movement of 100 Blue Jays on 2 October was noted (HP), and there was a large migration at the end of September (EAG). An almost total albino White-breasted Nuthatch was present for most of November at Burlington where it was seen at several feeders by Mrs. Ory Louther and others. Red-breasted Nuthatches have not appeared in numbers with 1 seen in Des Moines (LW), and 3 netted in September (PP). Brown Creepers totaling 78 were banded, most in late October (PP). A House Wren on 25 October was a late record (PP) with a big migration noted in September (GDeL). A Winter Wren was seen 17 October (DK), another has been seen from time to time (J, DB), and 21 banded (PP).

Mimics, Thrushes. A Mockingbird was seen on several dates late in October and early November (GDeL). A late Brown Thrasher was netted 8 November (PP). Robins were abundant in Des Moines. A total of 46 Hermit Thrushes were banded, most of them in October (PP). A Swainson's Thrush on 9 October was

rather late (PP), but none was seen (GDeL). A Gray-cheeked on 19 October was very late (JB). From 21 August to 25 September 17 Veeries were banded (PP).

Kinglets. Reports of these varied. There were three reports of mixed flocks on 23 October (DH). On 9, 10, and 21 October there were good waves, mostly of Ruby-crowned. Golden-crowned were reported as: many on 11 October (GDeL); numerous (RZ); very good migration with 365 banded, the peak on 21 October (PP). There was a big flight of Ruby-crowned on 22 September, and others on 8-10 October (GDeL); but a "poor migration with only 131 banded" (PP); and few (GB,RZ).

Vireos, Warblers. The Red-eyed Vireo migration was thought poor (PP). Philadelphia Vireos were banded: 1 on 22 September (GDeL), and 3 in September (PP). The warbler migration was thought satisfactory (PK), but poor (GB). Numerous waves as early as 25 August and extending well into September were noted. Several Orange-crowned were seen on late dates; 28 October (PK), and 31 October and 2 November (JB). Some of the more unusual finds are a Cape May banded 9 October (GDeL), a Black-throated Blue on 11 September (PP), a Kentucky on 15 September (MN), and 2 banded 23 September (GDeL). Yellow-throats were very low (PP), but numerous in September (GDeL), and one on 3 November was a record late date (RZ).

Icterids, Tanager. More than 30 Bobolinks were found at Red Rock on 28 August (WC). A rather late Orchard Oriole was seen 14 August (GDeL). As many as 7 young Baltimore Orioles were netted at the same time, with 22 banded from 13 to 28 July (GDeL). Rusty Blackbirds: 25 on 10 November (DK). Brewer's Blackbirds: hundreds were migrating the first of September (EG); 5 seen on 30 September (GB); observed on 12 November (RZ). A Western Tanager at Des Moines on 4 November (WHD), see longer note.

Finches. The sparrow migration was very disappointing (PK), but good (RZ). An Indigo Bunting on 23 October was a late record (PP). Few Purple Finches are mentioned, "firsts" are 28 October (GDeL), and 7 November (FK). The only report of Redpolls or Siskins mentions 50 of each at Castalia on 8 November (DK). LeConte's Sparrows were seen on 15 October (GDeL), and 4 on 24 October at Red Rock (WC). A Sharp-tailed Sparrow at E. Twin Lake on 13 September was early (HP). A late Vesper was netted on 1 November (PP). Juncos seemed to be late in arriving, a first was on 5 October (LS). An Oregon Junco was netted and photographed on 15 October (PP). Harris' Sparrows were abundant (GDeL,RZ), as were White-throated. Lincoln's Sparrows were numerous (RZ). The Snow Buntings seen were 1 on 30 October and 2 on 7 November at Red Rock (WC), and 2 on 7 November (DK).

Observers: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville and Red Rock Refuge; John Beamer, Red Rock Refuge; Joe and Dorothy Brown, Des Moines; Eldon J. Bryant, Akron; Wm. Criswell, Red Rock Refuge; Mrs. Genevieve DeLong, Lamoni; Mrs. E. A. Getscher, Hamburg; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Mrs. D. M. Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Fred W. Kent, Iowa City; Pearl Knoop, Marble Rock; Darwin Koenig, Castalia; Dick Mooney, Des Moines; Mrs. Marcia Nicholson, Des Moines; Mrs. Helen Peasley, Des Moines; Peter C. Petersen, Davenport; Andrew Phillips, Fort Dodge; Lillian Serbousek, Cedar Rapids; Mrs. Marie Spears, Shenandoah; Mrs. Lurene Warters, Des Moines; Mrs. Shenandoah; Woodward H. Brown, 432 Tonawanda Drive, Des Moines 50312.

The deadline for notes on the winter season is 15 February.

GENERAL NOTES



Western Tanager in Des Moines - Only a few goldfinches have come to our feeders this fall, due probably to an abundance of seeds in an adjoining vacant lot, so on 4 November my wife called saying there was a goldfinch just outside the window. The bird was on a horizontal branch not over seven feet from the window, and it was immediately apparent that, while it had the coloration of a female goldfinch, it was half again as long. The light colored bill was not that of a finch, nor was it an oriole bill. Prominent wing-bars ruled out any changing plumage of the local tanagers and a look at the plate of the female Western Tanager in *Birds of Colorado* made identification possible.

Oddly enough, I had received a call several weeks earlier from a location not over three quarters of a mile distant saying that a bird which had been observed at close range fitted the description of a female Western Tanager. Previous published records of this species are limited to sightings of two males seen in 1969 at Little Storn Lake (I.B.L. 39:44), and DeSoto Bend (I.B.L. 39:64). While the male is unmistakable, females could easily be overlooked or misidentified due to their dull plumage. - WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.

BOOK REVIEWS



Louis Agassiz Fuertes & the Singular Beauty of Birds -- Frederick George Marcham, editor -- Harper and Row, New York -- 220 p., 78 black and white illustrations, 60 color plates - 1971 -- \$35.00.

The publication of this large (11 1/4" x 14 1/4") book should resurrect the name of Louis Fuertes from the undeserved obscurity into which it has fallen in these fifty years after his death. A selected cross section of his works from the 1890's to 1927, the year in which he was killed in a car crash, is presented in this volume, edited by Cornell University Professor Frederick G. Marcham. The pictures range from early drawings and field sketches to full scale oil paintings of birds in scenic surroundings. A portion of Fuertes' correspondence and a biographical essay by the editor accompany the drawings and paintings. A far too brief introduction and critical statement on Fuertes' art by Roger Tory Peterson opens the book along with a foreword by Dean Amadon. A useful bibliography is also included.

Many of the pictures have not before been reproduced, and others found their way into print only in volumes of limited appeal and distribution. For this reason the book is a fine supplement to the pictures in the Forbush series and the National

Geographic Magazine with which large numbers of readers are familiar. Some of the monochrome wash studies, originally quite small, are enlarged to page size, to their detriment; the colors in one or two reproductions of the oils appear to be degraded by glare from photographic lights; and plate 58, an action study in oil of a Goshawk, is miscaptioned a Gyrfalcon, ample faults in a book selling for thirty-five dollars!

A long-needed art reference work in the rather slim corpus of discussions of bird art as art, this book will generally delight long-time Fuertes fans, and hopefully introduce many new readers to the work of this giant among illustrators of modern American ornithological literature. Suggest its purchase to your favorite college or city librarian, and watch the remainder lists a few years hence for its appearance there, then treat yourself to a copy. - Joseph Brown.

Birds of Europe -- Bertel Brunn and Arthur Singer -- McGraw Hill Book Co., New York -- 319 p., over 2,000 color illustrations and many maps -- 1971 -- \$6.95.

This book is the American edition of a book which appeared in Europe with the title **The Hamlyn Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe**. Basically it follows the format of **Birds of North America**, which is now well established as the leading American field guide. The plates illustrate most plumages and portray the posture most likely to be encountered in the field. The book was printed in Italy and judging by the species with which this reviewer is familiar, the birds are accurately depicted. The text gives length and in some cases wingspread; a general statement regarding abundance; comments on identification by plumage and distinctive habits and brief data on food and nesting. It is a very compact book aimed at assisting in field identification as much as possible. One good feature of the American book not used in this volume is the representation of sonograms of typical songs. The introduction gives exact details on how to best use the book including many good tips to field identification. Some of the most important sites for the observation of migrating birds are mapped. If you are planning a trip to Europe and can take only one guide, I would strongly recommend this one. It is reasonably priced and well produced, written and illustrated. -- ed.

Bird Study -- Andrew J. Berger -- Dover Publications, New York -- 380 p., 176 figures, 8 tables -- 1971 -- \$3.95, paperbound.

The reprint of one of the better general introductory texts first printed in 1961. It is written on about a college freshman level and should be practical for most IOU members in this aspect. It is recent enough to be essentially still current. The author cites much in the way of up-to-date research throughout the book. The chapter titles give a summary of the material covered, including field identification, bird habitats, migration, behavior, song, courtship and nest building, eggs and young, structure and function, conservation, systematics and introducing the bird. One of the most interesting chapters is the one on field identification. It covers naming birds, geographical range, seasonal occurrence, where to find birds, learning bird sounds, visual helps, and confusing problems such as dimorphic species, similar sexes, immature, fall and winter plumages.

This book should be in all public and college libraries. The local bird clubs in Iowa could perform a great service by providing books like this and the next one reviewed for their public library if they are not on its shelves. Selection from the many books available is one of the greatest problems for public libraries. -- ed.

Fundamentals of Ornithology -- Josselyn Van Tyne and Andrew J. Berger -- Dover Publication, New York -- 624 p., 254 figures -- 1971 -- \$5.00, paperbound.

Another general text on ornithology, first appearing in 1959 but going a step past the book reviewed above. The level of this book is advanced college or perhaps graduate. The organization is somewhat like Berger's *Bird Study*, with chapters on paleontology, anatomy, plumage and molt, senses and behavior, voice and sound production, bird distribution, migration, flight, food and feeding habits, breeding behavior, social relations, taxonomy and nomenclature and the classification of world birds by families. This final chapter is a very fine reference source, providing a summary of physical characteristics, range, habits, food, breeding, technical diagnosis and classification, sources and references.

This book should not be attempted as a first book on general ornithology. One should have a basic background from some of the more elementary texts and a good vocabulary in ornithology first. The references are especially good and quite detailed. -- ed.

Songs of Western Birds -- Donald J. Borror -- Dover Publications, New York -- record and 28 p. booklet with many figures -- 1971 -- \$3.00.

A sequel to the other two Borror records, *Common Bird Songs* and *Songs of Eastern Birds*. Equally well produced this record covers sixty species. The booklet includes black and white illustrations of these birds, a discussion of their songs and spectrographs of the songs from the record. If one learns to mentally interpret sounds heard in the field into spectrographs it will be more useful to employ the *Birds of North America* by Robbins et al. The species are grouped on the bands of the record by habitat. In the case of western birds, this is especially beneficial as these associations hold up very well and are composed of fewer species than in the east. One who plans to vacation in the west will do well to use this record to learn some of the common species and have a head start on identification. -- ed.

Far Afield in the Caribbean -- *Migratory Flights of a Naturalist's Wife* -- Mary W. Bond -- Livingston Publishing Co., Wynnewood, Pa., -- 142 p., many drawings, one map -- 1971 -- \$4.95.

A collection of Mary Bonds recollections of some of James Bond's experiences while studying West Indian birds. Unexpected and often humorous things happen during bird excursions in foreign countries as this reviewer knows from first hand experience. Mrs. Bond, a novelist, does a good job of relating some of these incidents in a very readable prose. For those unfamiliar with James Bond, whose name was "borrowed" by his good friend Ian Fleming for a well known fictional character, he is the leading expert on West Indian birds and the author of several books on them. Those who have not birded out of the United States will get a bit of the flavor of this experience. Those who have birded in the Caribbean area will get an additional insight into the areas they know from this book. ed.

Birds of Moose Mountain, Saskatchewan -- Robert W. Nero and M. Ross Lein -- Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Regina Saskatchewan -- 56 p., 6 photographs, 2 maps -- 1971 -- \$2.00, paperbound.

Moose Mountain is located in southeastern Saskatchewan, about 50 miles from the North Dakota border and 30 miles from the Manitoba border. It comprises the area surrounding Moose Mountain Provincial Park and is made up of a good selection of habitats. The species list totals 210 species, about two-thirds of the provincial total. The major field work was done by three undergraduate students

including the junior author during the summer of 1965.

This book is another in a fine series of regional works published by the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. They are to be complimented on doing a remarkable job in a thinly populated province. --ed.

Heron Study

At the top of the aquatic food-chain, the Great Blue Heron may well be an important indicator species. The Laboratory of Ornithology is planning a nationwide survey of this species.

The first step will be to compile an inventory of heronries. To this end, we appeal to all readers with knowledge on this point to write to us. Information may be recent or old; detailed or sketchy. Even "I remember seeing a herony as a boy" is helpful if the site is remembered well enough to locate on a topographic map.

We hope that this inventory will contain the exact locality of the herony, a general description of the site, and as much history as possible. We hope that this stage of the program can be completed by the winter so that arrangements can be made for census work in the 1972 breeding season. - David B. Peakall, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.

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DUPLICATES:

No. 97, 1916, Vol. 28 No. 4.

1925, Vol. 37 No. 2 (2 copies)

A Check-list of the Fossil and Prehistoric Birds of North America and the West Indies - by Alexander Wetmore- Price-\$1.00 (Smithsonian Misc. collection - Vol. 131 No. 5) Jan. 25, 1956.

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